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Come and Join Us Brothers

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Come and join us brothers.

“Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow!” – Frederick Douglass

African Americans were volunteering to fight and die for American ideals almost 90 years before they were granted their freedom.

“If anyone doubts the devotion to country and the love of liberty of the Negro, he has only to spend a few hours in searching the records of American history to be convinced that his doubts are ill-founded and that these people, although denied the full boon themselves, have given themselves in full measure for the justice and liberty which America promises to all who seek her shores.” – Dr. George E. Haynes

President Abraham Lincoln reluctantly authorized full recruitment of Black soldiers late in 1862. Three well-known African Americans took the lead. Travelling separately throughout the East and Midwest, they signed up recruits and sent them to Massachusetts, where the first two officially authorized Black regiments (the 54th and 55th) were organized and trained. Mainly due to the herculean efforts of those three visionaries, Black fighting men made up almost 10 percent of the troops who wore the victorious union blue during the Civil War. Frederick Douglass, perhaps the best known and most eloquent 19th century spokesperson for Blacks, worked the East. John Mercer Langston, the most scholarly Black member of the Fifty-First Congress, worked the Midwest, as did the equally remarkable and outstanding Martin Robison Delany. He was commissioned a major by President Lincoln, thus becoming the first African American officer in the Civil War.

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